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* THEY NEED FOOD

The following background material has been compiled from official reports and releases issued by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration whose representatives are stationed in devastated areas all over the world.

PRESCRIPTION: MILK AND EGGS

Vladislav Zelonka is a 7-year-old boy in the Moravska-Ostrava district of Czechoslovakia. When he stood before the doctors who were to examine him, his eyes spoke silently of the tragedy of a young life suffering from tuberculosis. During the war his father, Vaclav, a locksmith, was arrested by the Germans for "illegal activities." His mother did all in her power to feed him properly, but it just couldn't be managed. Tuberculosis was the result. The doctors say he may win the fight to live--but it will take lots of milk and eggs.

MALNUTRITION SHRIVELS THE CHILDREN

Mrs. Cecilia Davidson, welfare worker of New York City, who spent eight months in France working among children liberated from Germany reports:

"Everyone's first reaction was one of shock concerning the physical condition of these children. They are dwarfed from years of malnutrition. Physically they look half their ages with faces that are tired and old--yet they speak like little old men."

"One little girl brought in what we thought was a baby about 17 months old. His little arms and legs had not developed and he was tiny in size. You can imagine how eerie it was to have this baby turn around and talk to us like an old man. He was over five years of age and he could not walk."

EVEN CHILDREN GO HUNGRY

In the small Yugoslav village of Flasenica, reached by a long, difficult climb from the Drina Valley, the village president epitomized what food meant to his townspeople, when on the arrival of the first load of grain, he said quietly:

"Our children eat every other day."

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TIME OUT TO HUNT FOOD

Food is at the heart of the problem of Italy's entire national recovery. Take the case of the coal mines at Carbonia. Absenteeism among the miners has been as high as 30 percent, and mine operations have been slowed down also because of a 10 percent monthly labor turnover. One reason is the low food ration. Miners miss work in order to scrounge for food for their families and themselves.

A DECENT BURIAL

In one city of China when deaths from famine reached such proportions that it was difficult to provide for the disposal of all the bodies, a charitable Buddhist organization lined up coffins in the street. Starving Chinese staggered into the coffins and lay down to await death, in this way assuring themselves of burial.

MALNUTRITION? THEN TUBERCULOSIS

Lack of food leads to malnutrition that has made millions of youngsters in Europe easy prey to disease, particularly tuberculosis. This dread disease borders on epidemic proportions. Dr. Rudolph Skokowaka, child welfare specialist at the Polish Ministry of Health, reports that out of the 70,000 school children given the Pirquet test and X-Ray in Prague, 40 percent showed signs of lung disorders.

Incidence of tuberculosis in Greece was found to have increased four and a half times during the war years. In Yugoslavia the case rate and death rate doubled, while in Italy the death rate rose two and a half times.

Dr. J. B. McDougall, a tuberculosis expert of Glasgow, Scotland, predicts that many of Europe's children, denied proper treatment today, will be crippled for life by tuberculosis of bones and joints.

Good food and rest are essential in the long drawn out treatment for this debilitating disease.

A PAIR TOO YOUNG TO KNOW--TB

Little Eva Trousilova, aged 3, is the daughter of a miner and Marenka Tanova, aged 4, is the daughter of a workman in a foundry. At the TB examination center they were frightened, and cried when the kind hands reached out to remove their tattered dresses. Even more frightened were their mothers, who knew what the children were too young to know--that both cards read the same:

"Undernourished. Tubercular." Eva and Marenka, however, could be helped, if they get good food in time.

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PEOPLE PULL PLOWS

The agriculture of Yugoslavia suffered staggering losses during the war. The country lost over half of its cattle, sheep and poultry and draft animals. In Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Montenegro and sections of Macedonia, this loss has been as much as 95 percent. As a result of the shortage of draft power plus the prolonged drought, the 1945 crop was far below early estimates. Fats and meats are in extremely short supply. But the prospects for 1946 are better. UNRRA has supplied tractors, draft animals and other farm equipment, and these have helped. But where no other means are available, the people themselves drag the plows; six and eight to the plow. As a result of this work, the fall sowing is comparable to the prewar proportions.

These people are trying to help themselves, but until they can harvest a good crop they are in desperate need of food.

STARVATION IN HONAN PROVINCE

Nearly two million persons, one-sixth of the estimated population of formerly Japanese-occupied Honan Province are on starvation rations, and nearly that many are without adequate clothing or shelter, as disease and epidemics sweep through the province. In the worst hit districts of western Honan, some 15 percent of the population died of want soon after the defeat of Japan. Meanwhile, 200,000 impoverished war refugees are pouring back to western Honan only to find their homes burned, their meagre possessions looted, their crops unplanted and their tiny plots of land despoiled.

ITALIAN CITIES ON DAY TO DAY BASIS

A telephone report from Rome the latter part of February indicated that there was only a two-week supply of wheat in the country. Since this supply is poorly distributed, due principally to lack of transportation, all major cities are living on a day-to-day and in some cases almost hourly, basis.

EXTREME SHORTAGE EVEN IN HOSPITALS

Food in Polish hospitals, as elsewhere, is extremely short. Adults get practical no milk. A standard meal in one hospital consists of small potatoes with a cereal gruel poured over them. The patients receive meat or an egg only once in a week or two.

FOOD PRODUCTION CAPACITY DEVASTATED

During six years of German occupation, the entire economy of Czechoslovakia was plundered, and the devastating effects of fighting were felt from one end of the republic to the other. A large part of its livestock, tractors, and agricultural draftpower was lost. As a result, Czechoslovakia -- prior to the war largely self-sufficient in food -- was able to grow barely half as much food as before the war.

KOREAN RICE CROP REDUCED

"When I was in Korea in January," states Glenn Riggs, chief agricultural rehabilitation officer for the UNRRA Southwest Pacific Office, "I found that the rice crop there would be cut in half, owing to the lack of fertilizer."

LACK OF FOOD STUNTS GROWTH

One of the most striking facts about Europe's children is their stunted growth. Dr. Katharine Dodge of New York City, first woman medical officer to go overseas for UNRRA, puts it this way:

"After a few months of increased food a child fattens up and begins to look fairly normal. It is only when you find out that the little boy you thought was eight is really 12 that you realize what has happened to Europe's children."

CROPS BUT NO TRANSPORTATION

Growing the crop is often not enough to insure food. In parts of Poland 1945 crops were harvested by hand with superhuman exertion. But in many instances these harvested crops rotted in the fields because the farmers had neither trucks nor horses to move them to the cities.

HOMELESS, HUNGRY CHILDREN

Europe's millions of homeless and hungry children are one of its most desperate problems. Poland estimates that more than 500,000 of its youngsters are orphans or half-orphans; Yugoslavia also sets its figure at 500,000; Greece between 50,000 and 100,000; tiny Albania 4,000, while Czechoslovakia has found more than 50,000 in the ravaged "Black Belt" of Eastern Slovakia alone.

In many cases their parents died that these children might live--- died of starvation while the children ate, or were killed protecting them with their own bodies from shellfire. Others were orphaned by mass executions of adults.

Some of these homeless children are in child care institutions, but most of these institutions are in desperate need of food as well as other basic supplies.

Other children get scanty care through the generous effort of some individual-- as in the case of the young Greek girl who gathered over 20 waifs in a windowless house in Piraeus. They were found by a welfare worker sleeping on the floor, in rags, without heat and all the food that they could scavenge cooked in the one single large pot.

Many orphaned children throughout Europe are still running wild, fed by one family here and another somewhere else. They may be taken temporarily into a family circle and kept there as long as there is food, and then, when there isn't, they are often turned out again to shift for themselves.

FACE TO FACE WITH FAMINE

Banja Luka is a town on the Vrbas River in the mountainous area of Bosnia and is difficult to get to during the winter. A report from this town the middle of February said that local stocks of food on hand would be exhausted in March, and without further deliveries the prospect of famine conditions is almost certain.

EATING IS SO UNUSUAL

Welfare workers in Europe report that when children first come into the displaced persons' assembly centers they are frightened, timid, possessive. They rarely eat all of the food served them at a meal, but secrete part of it in their sleeves and pockets, unable to grasp the idea that there will be more for them a few hours hence.

HALF OF FOOD FROM UNRRA

The entire population of 7,000,000 in Greece depends on UNRRA for something over 50 percent of its food supply, according to a report from the UNRRA Mission in Greece.

FOOD THAT SAVES LIVES

Maurice Hunt, of Frankfort, Ind., child welfare specialist with UNRRA's Greek Mission, who returned to this country the middle of February after a year and a half overseas, says:

"I know that thousands of people, including many, many children, are alive in Greece today because of UNRRA food."

ALBANIANS DOWN BELOW MINIMUM DIET

Albania doesn't have much fertile land, and during the war even these areas were devastated. Also the Germans in their retreat consumed or destroyed most of the small reserves of food that remained. To make this dark situation blacker the calamitous drought drastically cut the 1945 crop. As a consequence by the fall of 1945, the people of Albania were on an average diet of about 1,000 calories a day.

EATING--A NEW EXPERIENCE

In Prague not long ago, Red Cross packages of food originally intended for prisoners of war were given to school children. The packages contained liver paste, corned beef, Cheddar cheese, salmon, sardines, chocolate, concentrated orange juice, oleomargarine, and powdered milk. To the young Czechs who grew from babyhood during the six years of German occupation these were delicacies now tasted for the first time.

FAMINE NEAR AT SWATOW

An estimated 130,000 persons died as a result of famine and disease in eastern Kwangtung Province of south China during the last three years. In January famine was reported near at Swatow, southern port city now packed with refugees. At least 50 percent of the people in Swatow need rations.

WORST SINCE 17th CENTURY

The people of Europe are suffering their grimmest winter since the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century. In ruined Warsaw, for example, nearly a million men, women, and children are living in squalid holes and dugouts with little food, mostly without fuel or warm clothing or sanitation. Each month about 10,000 people in Warsaw alone are dying of starvation and disease.

FOOD PICTURES MAKE EYES SHINE

A popular item in the Santa Maria di Baghi hospital for displaced persons was old American magazines, a recently returned doctor reports. All the boys were eager to learn English, but whether they could read or not, the colored pictures were sheer delight for them--especially the advertisements. One sick little boy would lie there and study a certain ad by the hour. It was a colored advertisement of a refrigerator with its door wide open displaying shelves well stocked with all kinds of food. He'd look at it, his eyes shining. To him that was America.

NUTRITION AND WORK OUTPUT

The close relation of nutrition to work output was demonstrated recently in the case of coal miners in North China.

Production at the vital Kailan coal mines at Tongshan in North China nearly doubled upon the arrival of UNRRA flour which is now being used to pay the miners. The mines supply most of the coal for China's commercial and industrial centers at Shanghai, Peiping and Tientsin.

Statistics show that the mines were producing about 30,000 tons of coal a week last November. Immediately after notice was posted that workers would be paid in flour, coal production jumped to 55,000 tons a week. Kailan mining administration officials stated that the arrival of the flour was directly responsible for the great increase in production. The promise of payment in the much-needed flour attracted many of the workers back to the mines.

UNDERNOURISHMENT IN VIENNA

A Viennese newspaper in January quoted the Municipal Health Office as declaring that about 50 percent of the Viennese school children are seriously and 50 percent moderately, undernourished. In addition to these, a small number show defects due to vitamin lack. There is a serious increase in infectious diseases. The most alarming aspect of the child health problem, according to the health office, is the rapid increase in advanced cases of tuberculosis.

THEY NEED SOAP

Soap was one of the scarcest articles on the continent during the occupation. It continues even more scarce in this first post-war winter. As a result scabies are prevalent everywhere. Almost every relief worker wants a whole shipload of soap and ointments for his own particular district. They know that only when Europeans get enough soap can they hope to lick scabies and other skin diseases born of dirt.

NINE OUT OF 10 COWS GONE

Here's one reason why milk is hard to get in Europe today. Only one out of 10 of the prewar dairy cattle in the Athens milkshed was left after Greece was freed.

LOSS OF COWS CUTS MILK SUPPLY

In Slovakia about 80 percent of the cattle and about 70 percent of the pigs were lost during the war. With their cows gone, the country is almost without milk from local sources. All available milk is given children under the age of six; but there just isn't enough for supplementary feeding of under-nourished children and hospital cases.

THE COST OF FIGHTING AGGRESSION

In 1938, in a desperate attempt to halt the invading Japanese, the Chinese blasted their vitally important dikes at Chengchow permitting the Yellow River to flood some 2,000,000 acres of precious wheat land--actually China's bread-basket, capable of producing 200,000,000 bushels of grain annually--and forcing hundreds of thousands of northern Honan and Anhwei farmers and millions nearby to flee for their lives.

It was estimated that 5,000,000 persons were in the area invaded by the Yellow River waters, when the flood came. At the peak of the flood the water's depth varied from 5 to 10 feet and more. And of the 2,000,000 living in that area now at least one million are on the brink of starvation.

Throughout the war nothing could be done to repair the dikes or control the river and China had to carry on without the wheat that should have come from that vast area of fertile land. UNRRA's priority task in China today is to help build up those blasted dikes, divert the rampaging river back to its former channel and reclaim those vitally needed 2,000,000 acres. The job must be done by this spring, before the annual spring-summer floods descend and in time to permit this year's crop to be planted so that China may reap a harvest of food for next winter.

About 300,000 laborers are needed for the work. Many thousands of them are on the job now. Fed with UNRRA food, aided by UNRRA technicians and facilitated by UNRRA-imported pile drivers, tools, trucks and equipment--the gigantic project is well under way.

